

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

HEREWITH FULL TEXT MURREY MARDER COLUMN WASHINGTON POST -
DECEMBER 20, 1973:

THE SOVIET UNION CONTENDS THAT IT TRIED IN VAIN TO
ALERT THE UNITED STATES TO THE DANGER OF AN OUTBREAK OF WAR-
FARE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE MONTHS BEFORE THE OUTBREAK
OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT ON OCT. 6 ACCORDING TO A DIP-
LOMATIC SOURCE.

WARNINGS THAT ARAB-ISRAELI TENSION WAS "EXPLOSIVE" AND
THAT PRESSURE WAS MOUNTING IN EGYPT TO RECOUP TERRITORY CAP-
TURED BY ISRAEL IN THE 1967 WAR WERE PASSED TO THE NIXON
ADMINISTRATION AS LATE AS SEPTEMBER A SOVIET DIPLOMATIC
SOURCE SAID YESTERDAY.

SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER LEONID I. BREZHNEV, IT
WAS SAID, TOLD PRESIDENT NIXON EARLIER AT THEIR SUMMIT CON-
FERENCE IN JUNE, THAT HOSTILITIES MIGHT BREAK OUT "AT ANY
TIME."

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SUBSEQUENT WARNINGS OF URGENT NEED FOR DIPLOMATIC MOVE-

MENT TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT TO HEAD OFF A CONFLICT WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN PASSED BY THE RUSSIANS TO HENRY A. KISSINGER, NOW SECRETARY OF STATE.

THERE IS NO CLAIM THAT THE SOVIET UNION SPECIFICALLY WARNED THE UNITED STATES THAT WAR WAS IMMINENT IN EARLY OCTOBER. THE SOVIET VERSION INSTEAD, IS THAT THE SOVIET UNION REPEATEDLY TRIED TO CAUTION THE UNITED STATES THAT A CONFLICT WAS INEVITABLE IF NO PROGRESS WAS MADE TO PREVENT IT.

THE AMERICAN REACTION IS REPORTED FROM THE SOVIET SIDE, TO HAVE BEEN TWO-FOLD: DISBELIEF THAT THE EGYPTIANS WOULD LAUNCH AN ATTACK ON ISRAEL AND AMERICAN CONFIDENCE THAT IF THE EGYPTIANS WERE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO DO SO, THE EGYPTIANS WOULD "GET A BLOODY NOSE."

ON THE SOVIET SIDE IT IS SAID THAT THIS REACTION ILLUSTRATED A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE OF ASSESSMENT BY THE SOVIET UNION AND BY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION OF THE DANGER IN THE SITUATION. THE SOVIET UNION, THE ARMS SUPPLIER OF EGYPT, WITHDREW DEPENDENTS OF ITS MILITARY ADVISERS FROM EGYPT JUST BEFORE THE WAR BROKE OUT.

THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE OFFICIAL COMMENT FROM EITHER THE WHITE HOUSE OR THE STATE DEPARTMENT YESTERDAY ON THE SOVIET CONTENTION. EARLIER PRESIDENT NIXON EXPRESSED HOPE FOR A LASTING SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT IN THE CONFERENCE WHICH OPENS IN GENEVA ON FRIDAY WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION AS CO-CHAIRMAN. SECRETARY KISSINGER WHO WILL REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES, HAS BEEN IN FREQUENT CONSULTATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON ORGANIZING THE CONFERENCE FOR WHICH HE HAS TAKEN THE LEAD.

THE CLAIM THAT THE SOVIET UNION TRIED TO ALERT THE UNITED STATES TO THE DANGER OF ARAB-ISRAELI WAR WAS MADE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY NEWSMEN HERE ABOUT A SPEECH BY SEN. HENRY M. JACKSON (D-WASH) IN NEW YORK LAST MONDAY. JACKSON REPEATED A CHARGE MADE EARLIER BY HIMSELF AND OTHERS, THAT THE SOVIET UNION DEFAULTED ON AN AGREEMENT IT SIGNED WITH PRESIDENT NIXON ON JUNE 22 FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR BY FAILING TO CONSULT OVER THE THREAT OF WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE SOVIET UNION MAINTAINS THAT THERE WAS NO DEFAULT AND THAT IT REPEATEDLY

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TRIED TO WARN OF DANGER. (END TEXT) RUSH

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